My first accomplishment is the participation of my high school concert band at the 2010 city-wide music performance festival. The focus of the music performance festivals is on the performance and assessment of high school bands performing a varied array of band repertoire chosen by the directors. The focus is on best practices of the instructor and musicians to bring out the optimum musical performance for students.

The festival provides opportunities for solo performers, small ensembles, and large performing organizations to exhibit the highest level of adjudicated performance through the selection and presentation of quality music literature. The festival format allows students and teachers to hear other performers while competing against a standard of excellence instead of each other; as represented by the performance rubrics developed for each event. (Artifact 1) The assessment is broken up into two parts, music performance of three musical arrangements prepared prior to the assessment, and sight reading of one band arrangement. The requirements of the prepared band arrangements are a march, a grade 3 or higher arrangement, and a slow ballad. The adjudicators submit a rubric assessment on paper of each piece performed, as well as an audio tape of commentary assessment during the actual performance of each piece.

This accomplishment is significant because students have a chance to get valuable and specific feedback on their own music performance and the music performance of the entire ensemble from experienced adjudicators that span the ranks of professional musicians to university professors to veteran music educators. It is also significant because students get the opportunity to listen to many other high school bands participating in the event. This accomplishment is also significant to my specific school because it is the first time my high school has participated in this event since the 1970’s. This valuable educational experience was not given to my students until I became their music teacher.

**As a partner with student’s families** this accomplishment is significant because parents of band members attended the event and got the opportunity to see their child perform and hear other high school bands, experiencing the performance and assessment process along with their child. This accomplishment is significant as a **learner** because I am given valuable feedback on the specific arrangements my band performed and rehearsed by the adjudicators. I was then able to review and reflect on that feedback along with my students and apply it directly to my classes, future performances, and music program. My students watched their performance on videotape, and then listened to the adjudicators comments on audio tape during their performance in the background, getting a second by second evaluation of their performance. My band then had a discussion on the adjudicator’s evaluations, their own evaluations of themselves as individuals and the band as a whole, and wrote written reflections. These written reflections were in collaboration with the English department using best practices in writing and were graded by these guidelines.

This accomplishment is significant as a **collaborator and leader** with colleagues and professionals because in preparation for this event I am in contact with other high school band directors about rehearsal strategies, musical selection, the adjudication process, and overall preparation of my ensemble. In the months leading up to the assessment I was in contact with multiple band directors with whom I perform with in a community band on a weekly basis. We discussed types of programming, literature grade and quality, and what would best fit our perspective bands. Advice about playing the strengths of your ensemble through programming, I am also collaborating with the adjudicators by participating in this event and gaining their knowledge, insight, and advice on improving my band program and teaching techniques.

This accomplishment has had a direct impact on student learning through the rehearsal and preparation process, the actual performance at the event site, and the reflection process afterwards in class. The adjudicator’s notes and audio recordings were reviewed after the assessment took place; strategies suggested were applied directly to the pieces performed and new music given out for the next concert series. One suggestion to develop tone an adjudicator gave was playing long tones in 4, 8, 12, 16, and 32 beat progressions focusing on breathing and sound production. Incorporating crescendos and decrescendos using this same format focusing on ensemble balance and dynamic control also improved my ensemble significantly in the weeks and months after the assessment and is now a daily part of my warm up routine.

My second accomplishment involves being the chairperson and leader of the family and community involvement team for the past year and a half at my high school. One of the first goals of the family and community involvement team were to get parents involved with the school, so the team started a monthly meeting designed to inform parents of school events, activities, academic progress, and how to get more parents involved at the school and in their child’s academic life. These monthly meetings gave interested parents a forum to discuss and give their input to promote the success of their children and the student body. I setup the meeting times, meeting place, communicated to parents via phone calls, email, and used my band concerts as a publicity venue to invite parents. (Artifact 2: concert program cover) After the meetings I gathered this information and communicated it with the faculty in biweekly faculty meetings where we planned to implement some of the things the parents suggested, and brainstormed ways of improving parental contact and involvement. An example of this is an office space created for parents to come and volunteer at the school assisting in parental contact concerning grades, attendance, and behavior for a few hours per week. This was implemented at the start of this year. (Artifact 3: parent volunteer confirmation letter) The family and community involvement team is part of a larger organization known as the P.A.R.R. committee. P.A.R.R. is an acronym that stands for (Productive, Appropriate, Respectful, Responsible) It is a program implemented in partnership with a local university and focuses on positive behavioral intervention and supports (P.B.I.S.) “PBIS is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students.” (pbis.org) the mission of the family and community involvement team is to involve parents with their child’s academic life so they can be successful, involve parents and community in school activities, academics, and events, and create partnerships to work on school improvement priorities. My strong belief in parents being involved with their child’s academic life, progress, and success combined with my extensive experience in working with band parents and boosters from my previous high school led me to the leadership position of the family and community involvement team at my school.

This accomplishment is significant as a **partner with student’s families and community** because the teams sole purpose and mission is to involve families and the community with the high school. These partnerships include parent’s involvement in school events, communication, attendance, chaperoning, fundraising, school wide decision-making, and improving other parent’s involvement in their child’s academic progress. An example of this is a mother that was having trouble with her daughter’s attendance to class, tardiness, and slipping grades. She came to one of the meetings where we were discussing electronic monitoring of students academic progress and attendance through a software program called parent portal. (Artifact 4: Meeting agenda: parent portal) One of the things the mother was ecstatic about was an option discussed in the program that if checked off allowed for a text message to be sent immediately to the mothers cell phone if her daughter was marked absent or tardy during school, or grade dropped below a percentage set by the parent. The daughter was a trombone player in my beginning band and was not happy that I told her mother about this new way of monitoring her school progress and attendance as she was regularly cutting class. After her mother was registered with the parent portal system due to the parent meetings I organized, administrated, held a leadership role in, and connected back to the faculty, she was able to keep closer track of her daughter and help her improve on attendance and keep her grades up and has improved greatly over the past year. (Artifact5: mother’s confirmation) This specific success has driven one of the main goals of the team this current year of focusing on substantially increasing the number of parents on the online parent portal software system. (Artifact 6: Team goals/agenda 2010-2011) This year I have set up meeting times and dates where computer labs and staff are available for parents to come in and be guided through the process of signing up for this electronic monitoring system. (Artifact 7: Parent portal parent signup sheet)

This accomplishment is significant as a **learner** because involvement with parents and community directly impacts my teaching and thus student learning. Having a working relationship and more information about the background of my student’s families and the community are crucial to aiding in my ability to teach. In the weekly P.A.R.R. meetings all the chairs of each team gathered to collaborate with each other and go over action plans and school goals. My team was focused on parents and community and I was able to discuss our progress, objectives, and goals to the other teams. As a learner, I was able to listen and discuss with the other five teams, there objectives, progress, and goals covering large facets of the schools improvement, plans, academic and behavioral data and progress. (Artifact 8: PARR Agenda) Identifying the culture of the students and their families at school has better prepared me for the challenges of differentiating my instruction. Having important information like socio-economic status, language, religious affiliation, family structure, home-life, and parental support which I have gained through leading this team has contributed greatly to my learning as a teacher and directly impacts the way I instruct my students.

This accomplishment is significant as a **collaborator and leader** with colleagues because I am the leader of the team, and the team consists of a group of teachers at our school that chose to be involved in improving the connection with families and the community to our school. The teams were created a year and a half ago in conjunction with the P.A.R.R. program to meet school improvement schools to get off academic probation and create a safe, positive, and superior learning environment for all students. When they created the teams I volunteered and became leader and chairperson of the family and community involvement team at its inception.

This accomplishment has had a direct impact on student learning due to one of the main objectives of the family and community involvement team this current year at our school of signing up parents for the parent portal, an online website that lets parents monitor their students’ academic progress and attendance from any computer at any time. By parents monitoring their child’s attendance and academic progress, students stay on track and attend class, finish their homework and required assignments, and are accountable for their academic progress due to parental awareness and involvement. (Artifact 9: school wide data/parent portal data)

The nature of my third accomplishment is my collaboration, musical performance, and partnership in multiple ensembles and community bands over the past four years of my teaching career. “The accomplished music teacher is, first and foremost, an accomplished musician.” (nbpts.org) Being involved in these community musical organizations has created a vast network of musicians that have helped me grow as a musician, conductor, and teacher. I discussed the daily trials, tribulations, successes and failures of my program constantly striving towards improving my teaching and my student’s comprehension. I have invited these musical groups and individuals to my school to observe my classes and perform in joint community/school concerts. (Artifact 10: FHS winter concert program) I exposed my students to people of all ages that have continued their music learning process beyond high school and into old age giving examples of life-long learners and the value of continuing their music education after graduating high school.

Performing and practicing on a regular basis has been crucial to maintaining and developing my musical skills. **Modeling on my instrument** is the most powerful instructional strategies I have utilized to impact student comprehension. Daily professional development of my musical skills has been an extremely important factor in my maximum effectiveness as a music instructor. Current professional ensembles I am performing in include the Lane Tech Community Band, Chicago Chorale Winds, WND Jazz Ensemble, Old Town School of Folk Music Latin Jam, and performance at annual musical festivals in my city. (Artifact 11: Concert/gig flyers)

**This accomplishment is significant as a partner with student’s families and community** because all of the ensembles comprise of members of the communities in which I have taught. Many include current and past students, parents, community leaders, teachers, amateur and professional musicians. In one of the many ensembles I performed in was a brass quintet playing french horn. One of the quintet members was a parent from another high school. Before and after rehearsal every week we would discuss progress and events happening at our perspective schools. He would tell me about his daughter’s experiences in her schools ensembles as well as the band director’s teaching strategies, musical programming, and relationships with parents. I would in turn tell him my perspectives on issues in my program I was dealing with. Specifically, an issue came up concerning student behavior due to the band director that was newly hired. Many students in the band had loyalty for the past director and did not like the new director’s approaches to instruction. Being a newly hired director myself I was experiencing the same issues. I told him ways I was dealing with replacing a loved band director. I informed him that the transition between band directors can be extremely difficult as students build close relationships with their music teachers, and those bonds can be difficult to let go of after a band director moves on and another takes his/her place. I told him I communicated to the students and parents clearly my objectives, rules, planning process, and expectations. I constructed a band handbook so students and parents had a structured hardcopy guide to the program that clearly stated objectives, goals, and detailed steps that would be followed in case issues would arise. (Artifact 12: band handbook handout) Slowly building relationships and giving students time to adjust by building on successes in the ensemble were important during the transition period. Overall, this back and forth weekly conversation shed light on the **parent’s perspective** in dealing with band programs, teachers, and how to effectively communicate and improve my program, student, and parent relationships.

**This accomplishment is significant as a learner** because I am constantly learning by applying my skills as a musician, collaborating with other musicians on a daily basis, and networking with other professionals. I used my **community bands as a vehicle to increase secondary instrument skills** I was lacking, while getting advice from other players on the most effective ways to practice those instruments that were secondary to my main instrument the trumpet.

**This accomplishment is significant as a collaborator and leader** with colleagues and other professionals because in many of these ensembles I hold a leadership or principal position. Performing in musical ensembles requires constant collaboration in an effort to create a deep musical experience for both the musicians and the audience. This accomplishment is also significant as a collaborator because many of these ensembles membership comprise of other music directors, teachers, professional musicians, and community members. By being involved in these activities I create a network of musicians that I can use as **mentors** for advice on instruction, musicianship, administration, career goals, and performance opportunities for my students outside of the classroom and into the community. Specifically, my students had an upcoming bandmaster’s performance assessment, so in preparation I asked the conductor of one of my community bands to come to my school and act as an adjudicator and assess the bands performance. This conductor was a retired band director of over 30 years, trumpet player, veteran music educator, and personally a close friend and mentor. My band setup on our school stage and performed a program of three pieces, and sight read one piece in the exact sequence of events that would occur at the bandmaster’s assessment. He made audio comments, filled out the assessment rubric identical to the one at the future assessment, and gave comments after the program was complete. He also stepped up on the podium to work with the band on a few strategies and details that might improve the performance. Overall this experience was constructive to my students learning due to my **collaboration with other professionals through performing in community ensembles** as a musician.

**My accomplishment as a professional musician has had a huge impact on my students learning.** In this current year I cite the specific example of my performance in a community band I have been a member of the last two years after taking the current music teaching position I hold. This ensemble consists of local band directors, teachers, and advanced high school students. Recently the community band performed at another high schools annual winter concert, and a few weeks after performed at my high school concert as a special guest ensemble. (Artifact 12: Winter concert program 2010) My students wrote reflections of the concert as a whole, and many talked about the community band that I performed in. The balance, blend, and intonation of the band were some of the things they commented on, and gained insight upon. (Artifact 14: Student work: reflection winter concert 2010: ***add any specific comments from the reflection chosen***) Many of my students had never seen or heard a band concert other than my high schools ensembles. They were exposed to life-long learners, adults of many different career paths continuing their music education due to the joy of music making. Hearing an advanced ensemble gave my students a look at what their future in band might look like, and something to strive for.

**In your work outside of the classroom (beyond explicit student instruction), what was**

**most effective in impacting student learning? Why?**

In reflection of my accomplishments, **life-long learning** has been a staple of my instructional strategy. It is extremely valuable for my students to see adults of all ages playing their instruments as a recreational activity. This shows others take immense value in continuing their music education over the course of a lifetime. I constantly involve my students in my musical performance career inviting them to jam sessions and band rehearsals so they see firsthand the variety of musical opportunities that are available in their area. I have invited past professional ensembles to my concerts to perform, and have had professional musicians and veteran music educators assess my individual students and music program to ensure the highest quality of instruction and performance possible.

In my work outside the classroom, beyond explicit student instruction, my most effective activity was **building relationships and performing in ensembles with other teachers and musicians**. This was important because when I graduated from college and started teaching, I was able to gain the support and advice I needed to become a professional teacher. Graduating from college, student teaching, taking all the tests, and gaining my teaching certificate did not, and I believe could not, fully prepare anyone for the first few years of teaching. I was first hired approximately 1,500 miles away, in a different state from where I grew up and went to college, away from my family, friends, and colleagues. I was in effect, alone, with no professional support system. This great distance from my support systems made it crucial to form new networks and supports. The greatest way I **improved my instruction and thus directly impacted my students’ learning was creating friendly relationships with other veteran band directors**. I discussed with them day to day issues that helped me improve my instruction and run my band program. **Performing with other teachers and musicians** helped me gain the skills and knowledge I needed to fill the gaps I might have had on secondary instruments and musical knowledge. Having venues to practice my art form helped me to maintain the musical skills and ability level I needed to teach my students most effectively. My skills as a musician would have diminished slowly over time if I would not have been performing on a regular basis.

Individual practice would not have been enough to continue developing my own musicianship for the benefit of my students.

**Considering the patterns evident in all of your accomplishments taken together, what is**

**your plan to further impact student learning in the future?**

Considering the patterns evident in all of my above stated accomplishments, my plan to further impact student learning comes in many forms. First, I plan to **continue to participate in educational assessment concerts, have a leading role in family and community involvement, and performing in community ensembles** for the benefit of my students and instructional practices. Second, I have recently started my graduate studies in music education and plan to graduate in 2012. My graduate studies have increasingly encouraged me to **get involved in education policy, advocacy, and politics**, which I plan on increasing my involvement in, and expanding my knowledge of on a daily basis. Being up to date with the most current policy, data, and educational practices will continue to improve my instruction directly impacting my students’ learning. Third, I plan to continue to develop my program and **mentor others** in creating a successful music program in the inner city. I was hired at my school to revive a decaying music program in an urban environment, and will be finishing my third year at my school with impressive results in student musical progression, recruitment, and retainment. I plan on continuing that development through bringing in music professionals to increase private lesson instruction, create a peer mentoring program between high school and middle school band members, and advocating for music and arts programs in my city through community partnerships and outreach.